



DIVISION OF SOIL CONSERVATION

Rebecca S. Skillman, Lieutenant Governor

Andy Miller, Agriculture Director

Tammy Lawson, Director

Dear Indiana Conservation Stakeholders:

As many of you know the last few months have been a time of discovery and discussion. The members of the State Soil Conservation Board and the staff of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's Division of Soil Conservation have gathered input, inspired ideas and discussion; and provided forward thinking leadership. Your participation has been invaluable, and we thank you for taking the time to give us well thought-out ideas. The variety of opportunities ahead of Indiana conservation is as numerous as the stars. Oddly enough, through this deliberation period, stars seem to be aligning and some meaningful partnerships with other states, regions and on a national level seem more possible than ever before. As an example, amending the current CREP to include additional watersheds, as well as developing a new CREP is one of the most promising areas.

The Board and ISDA are being creative about how we improve statewide service. Building more opportunities through grants and incentive payments for SWCD work and other technical service providers seems to be a good structure for delivering these opportunities to landowners and farmers. Piggybacking our resources on the programs of our partners will help everyone accomplish more. As we coordinate our efforts throughout the conservation partnership, transparency and accessibility will improve. Landowners and farmers will have a better chance to understand programs and determine participation interest and eligibility on their own. Evidence can be found in the CREP signup rate. Over time landowners are becoming more informed and more eager to participate.

While programs need to be user friendly, so must our accountability tools. Every effort over the next year must be made to develop accountability tracking tools to not only provide decision-makers with the evidence of your work but also to bring recognition to those that are making the biggest contributions. The Board and the Division will continue to create web-based opportunities and improve efficiency of programs through web-forms.

Budget developments over the last two years have been challenging. Most of the Clean Water Indiana budget challenges have been how to use this money along side federal or local dollars. Recently ISDA was informed that the account control code would be changed for the CWI account making the account reverting. This adjustment by OMB is consistent with their work to support the Governor's initiative for fiscal responsibility. These types of changes have occurred throughout other agencies and fund centers in an effort to coordinate funds with statutory language. The 2007 CWI obligations are covered, and the 2008 allocation is still available. However, a yearly reverting account (where leftover money must be turned in at the end of each fiscal year) will not work with multi-year conservation programs. This challenge is well understood and we all in the conservation partnership must be diligent to correct this through the legislative



Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., Governor

Rebecca S. Skillman, Lt. Governor and Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development

Andy Miller, Agriculture Director

process. It is vital that as a partnership we work together to clean up technical issues such as these and continue to build a structure that is transparent, efficient and effective.

Finally, I would like to personally express my appreciation to those over the last few months that have participated in this process. I know that it hasn't been easy, and I recognize that mistakes have been made. Simply know that the Board and I are committed to a strong local conservation program that offers opportunities for SWCDs to truly serve their landowners and to deliver the products and dollars that are so desperately needed throughout our state. As long as everyone continues to genuinely come to the table with that single goal in mind, I'm convinced that success for Indiana soil and water protection is just around the corner.

Please refer to the attached presentation for the latest information from the last two months and from today's board meeting. Additionally, the minutes from the meeting will be posted over the next few days which will explain details of today's process and discussion. Please contact our office if we can be of assistance or answer any questions. There will be more to come within the next month.

Warmest Regards,
Tammy Lawson

Director, Division of Soil Conservation
Indiana State Department of Agriculture

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Report 10-4-07

October 4, 2007

<u>Watersheds</u>	<u>Contracts</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Obligated Funds</u>
Tippecanoe River	346	2039.9	\$295,830.00
Upper White River	132	1136.2	\$566,845.00
Pigeon/Highland Rivers	92	333.5	\$38,310.00
TOTAL	570	3509.60	\$900,985.00

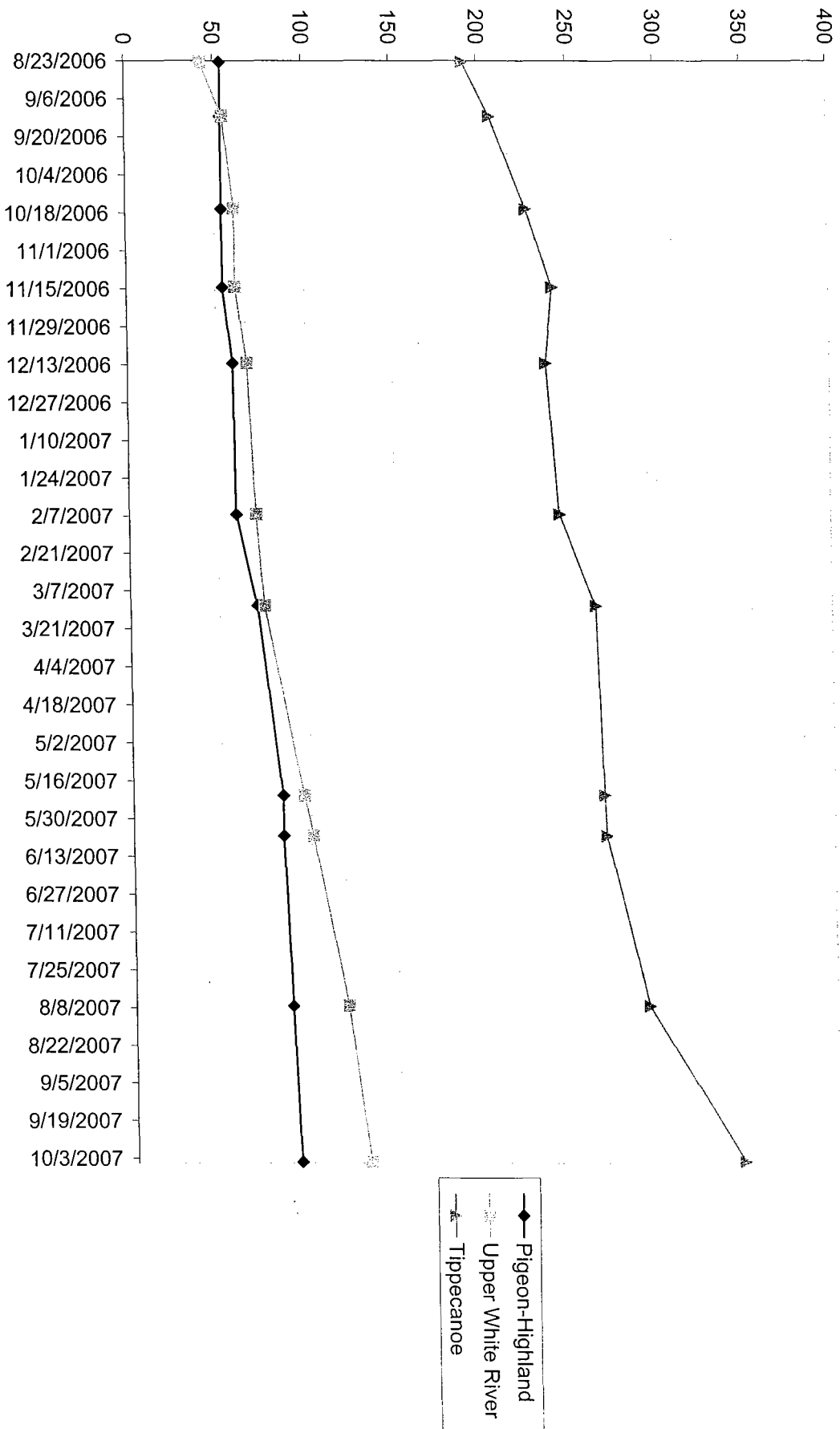
August 31, 2007

<u>Watersheds</u>	<u>Contracts</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Obligated Funds</u>
Tippecanoe River	300	2067.4	\$286,070.00
Upper White River	121	1043.6	\$519,590.00
Pigeon/Highland Rivers	88	283.8	\$38,310.00
TOTAL	509	3394.80	\$843,970.00

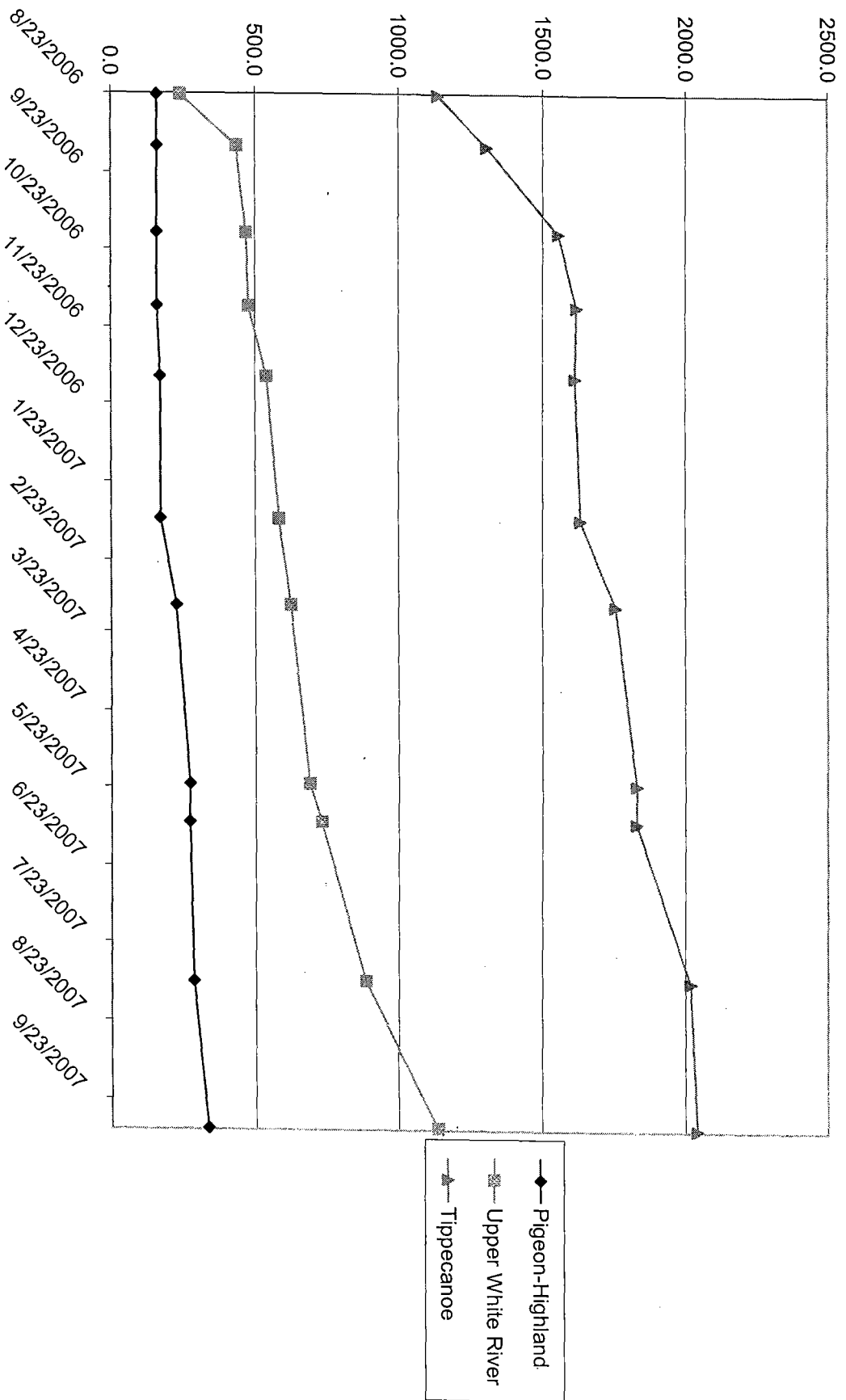
Contracts: +61
 Acres: +114.8
 Obligated: \$57,015

100 (+/-) signed LOI
 from Pulaski Co. last week

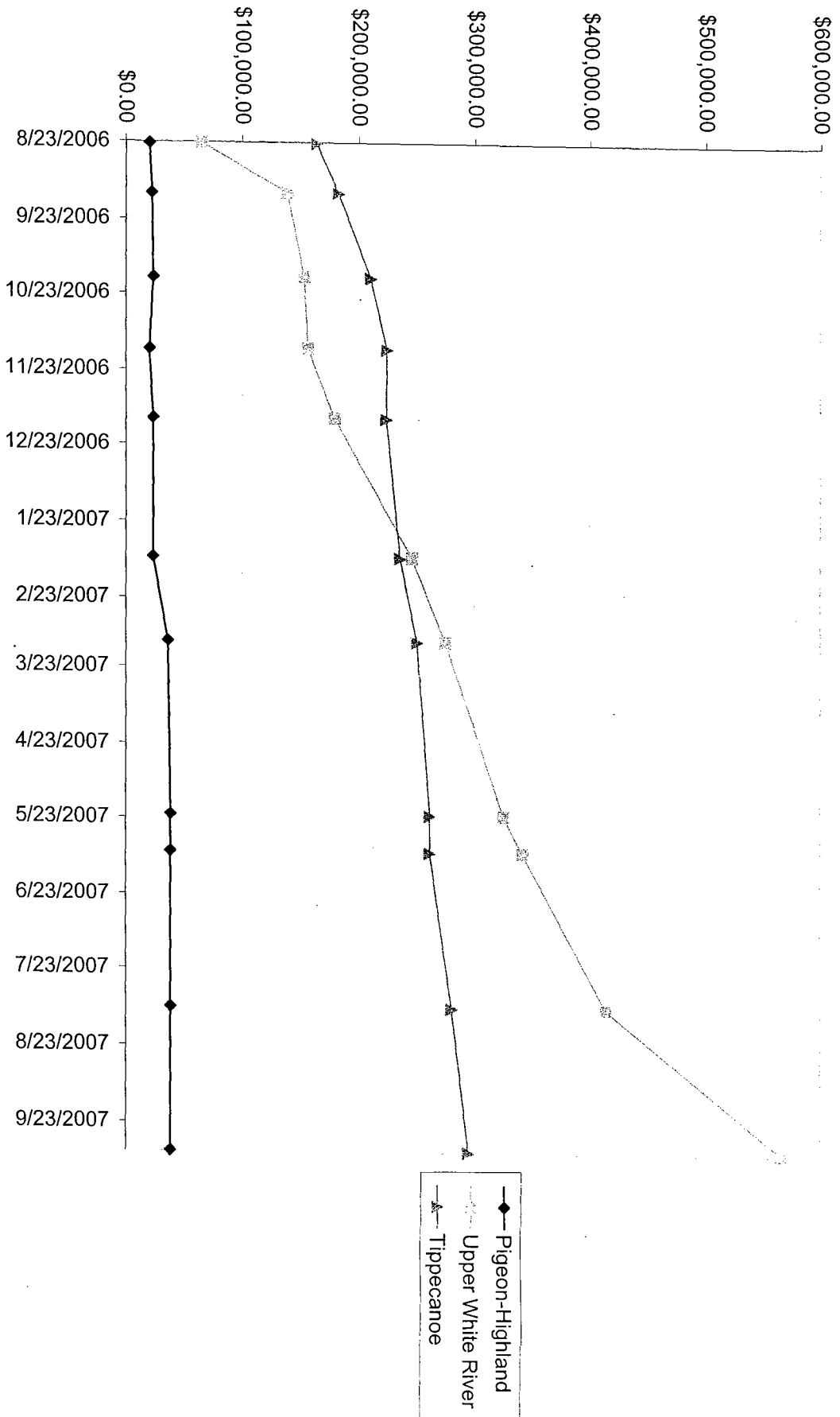
Contracts



ACRES



OBLIGATED FUNDS



Tippecanoe River Easement Report

October 18, 2007

Total Acres of Interest=	1,958.6 acres
Total Funds of Interested Acres	\$979,300.00
Total Acres Under Contract=	0.0 acres
Total Funds Allocated=	\$0.00
Total Funds Paid Out=	\$0.00

Clean Water Indiana Grant Report for the month of October

CWI 2006

- There are 21 closed grants from CWI 06 totaling \$105,157.00
- There are 6 more grants with completed projects, currently going through the process of receiving their funds. Total funding for these 6 grants comes to \$95,689.00
- Once these are processed, \$384,802.25 will be paid out of 06 funds to the districts.
- There are two 3 year grants starting the 2nd year of their contract. They are Noble County with a Central Office Manager, and Kosciusko with a Regional Technician. Both of these counties have received full payment for their first year funding and the initial payment of their 2nd year is going through the payment process now.

CWI 2007

- There are 3 closed grants from CWI 2007, and they total \$6,710.
- There are 4 more grants with completed projects currently going through the process of receiving their funds. Total funding for these 4 grants comes to \$6,327.00
- Once these are processed, \$327,726.12 will be paid out of 07 funds to the districts.

The last round of quarterly reports were due October 1st.

The 2007 CWI grants will expire on January 31, 2008. I look for some districts to be requesting extensions at the next board meeting.



**Indiana Association of
Soil and Water
Conservation Districts**

Protecting and enhancing Indiana's soil
and water resources for all Hoosiers



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To: State Soil Conservation Board

From: Jim Droege, President, IASWCD

Date: Tuesday, October 9, 2007

2008 Annual Conference

Conference is scheduled for January 14-16, 2008 at the downtown Indianapolis Marriott Hotel. Highlights:

- 19 breakout sessions in Conservation Implementation, Watershed Management, Organizational Management, and Communication/Outreach
- Special guest speaker – Colin Beavan, known as “No Impact Man”
- Special musical entertainment by Tim Grimm
- 3 in-depth workshops simultaneously during Business Meeting
- Conservation Round tables hour

Registration is now available on-line at www.iaswcd.org – 2008 Conference Callout

Farm Bill Issues

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) continues to encourage Districts across the country to touch base with their Senators regarding the proposed change of administration of Farm Bill programs from NRCS to FSA. IASWCD has sent letters to both Lugar and Bayh asking that any reorganization within agencies be discussed and determined after passage of the 2007 Farm Bill.

NACD Awards

Tippecanoe County SWCD was nominated for the NACD Collaborative Conservation Award in the North Central Region competition. The SWCD came in second place in the region, so their nomination will not be sent for the national competition, but it's a great testament to the successful conservation programs they offer.

THE IASWCD MISSION *is to represent SWCDs as one voice and assist the leadership of local Districts through coordination and education for the wise use and management of our natural resources.*

Indiana State Soil Conservation Board Meeting
October 9, 2007
NRCS State Conservationist Report

Farm Bill Update

With the House version of the Farm Bill complete, the Senate is now on deck to develop their version of the bill. The Senate Ag Committee will wait for the Finance Committee to act first, and will likely mark up their version of the bill at the end of October. There has been some talk on the Hill about using the Continuing Resolution as a vehicle to extend Farm Bill programs for a short period of time (for example, a month-long extension).

2007 Program Update

Fiscal Year 2007 program obligations were as follows:

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program obligated approximately \$10.9 million,
- Wetland Reserve Program obligated about \$9.5 million,
- Wetland Habitat Incentive Program obligated about \$416,000, and
- Conservation Security Program payments for prior year contracts amounted to approximately \$8.7 million.

Additional EQIP Livestock Funds

On Tuesday night, September 11, Indiana NRCS was notified that they would be receiving an additional \$100,000 in EQIP funds to enable temporary intensive grazing for livestock in corn or soybean fields while maintaining environmental sustainability. Indiana NRCS had three days to address these resource concerns utilizing the additional funds, by Friday September 14. Thanks to all of the partnership employees, we were able to successfully assist producers in need with these additional funds by the deadline. A big thank you goes out to everyone who helped with this effort. This temporary grazing will also be allowed with '08 EQIP dollars through a waiver that allows work to begin prior to the award of an EQIP contract.

2008 EQIP

Sign up for the 2008 EQIP program will be announced this week. While applications are accepted on a continuous basis, the initial round of funding will occur October 19th, and continue every two weeks until funding is exhausted. The Energy Bundle will again be offered, including incentives for utilizing no-till, cover crops, buffers and nutrient management as a system. As always, limited resource producers and beginning farmers are eligible for higher practice payments.

New Board Diversity Fact Sheet

NRCS, in cooperation with NACD and the National Association of RC&Ds, have developed a fact sheet on the importance of Board Diversity (attached). The fact sheet is available at http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/media/pdf/NB_230_7_9_a.pdf, and is attached.

Indiana NRCS Fiscal Year 2007 Accomplishments: Another Good Year for Conservation!



Conservation Accomplishments:

Completed thanks to the close working relationship with partnership employees & agencies

- Wrote conservation plans for over 300,000 acres
- Applied conservation on over 391,000 acres of cropland to improve soil quality
- Applied conservation on over 441,000 acres to improve water quality
- Applied conservation on almost 48,000 acres of grazing and forest land
- Applied almost 69,000 acres of conservation on non-federal land to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality
- Created, restored or enhanced almost 6,000 acres of wetlands
- Put 49 additional Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans in place
- Applied over 55 new Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans
- 7,540 conservation practices applied to the land



Partnership Projects:

- **Goose Pond** – Creating and restoring critical habitat & connecting international migratory floodways
 - Obtained IDNR permit to construct main pool, 1,630 acres
 - Establishing Least Tern nesting island through IDNR agreement
 - Finished plans for raising Highway 59
- **Wabash Wetland Reserve Enhancement Project** – Connecting existing WRP sites along the Wabash River to create a corridor of protected wetlands
 - Have almost met the project's 2,000 acre goal, one year early
- **Rapid Watershed Assessments** – Almost finished with development of on-line assessments for every 8-digit watershed in Indiana
- **Western Lake Erie Basin Project** – Multi-state watershed protection effort
 - Conducting watershed assessments & putting conservation on the ground
- **Conservation Implementation Teams** - Gaining efficiencies, consistency and reduced operating costs through a flexible partnership delivery system
 - Surveyed 3,184 practices
 - Designed 2,867 practices
 - Installed 2,519 practices





United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Board Diversity



Adding Diversity to the Conservation Partnership



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), along with the National Association of Conservation Districts and the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, Inc., plays a vital role in conserving our natural resources.

The importance of this partnership centers on the connection it has with the community. The partnership ensures that communities' interests are addressed when issues arise that affect soil health, water quantity and quality, energy, livestock, wildlife, air quality, plants, and quality of life issues of community residents.

Sometimes, however, the entire community is not aware of the great things the partnership is engaged in on their behalf or they don't think the partnership can help. If this is your situation, there are some things you can do to recruit new board members and generate interest!

Recruitment

Recruiting people of different skills, backgrounds, and ethnicity is a positive method of enhancing creativity on your board and promoting ideas that will appeal to a wider range of people. Answering the following questions can help guide your recruitment efforts:

- Who in the community is affected by your committee's actions?
- How many sectors of the community should be represented?
- Does the representation of your group mirror the diversity in the community?
- Is there an adequate community cross-section of race, gender, age, disability, and expertise among the committee members?
- Can your organization do more to help deliver conservation programs and services to a broader group of customers in the community?

Diversity

Ethnically and culturally diverse boards and councils with a variety of experiences, perspectives and expertise can produce comprehensive and powerful solutions to community problems. Valuing diversity means being aware of, sensitive to, and appreciating differences such as ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, race, culture, physical abilities, sexual orientation, and lifestyles.

Before you begin your recruitment efforts you should assess the demographics of your board/council to see if it is representative of your community, county, city, watershed, and/or RC&D area's general population.

Recruitment Tips

- Conduct a current analysis of the demographic composition of the area you serve so you are able to develop appropriate recruitment goals, along with a time line.
- Identify recruitment barriers and ways of overcoming those barriers.
- Enlist the help of community leaders. Encourage people of different cultures, languages, ethnic backgrounds, and beliefs to assist your organization by asking them to provide names of possible recruits.
- Cultivate organizational partnerships with groups that cater to the needs and interests of diverse audiences (e.g., people of color, women, the disabled, etc.).
- Invite community leaders representing various minority organizations to your meetings as guest speakers or to occasionally observe your meetings.
- Incorporate non-traditional networking channels to reach diverse audiences (for example, foreign language press, places of worship, and community-based organizations' newsletters).



- Ask your local partners, neighbors, friends, and associates whom they would recommend to serve with your organization.
- Develop written statements that reflect the diversity that you wish to attain. Include articles on diversity in your publications and presentations to communicate the message that your board/council/office is open and accessible to all.
- Ask potential recruits to attend meetings and go out with board members on projects. This can indicate whether the fit is right from both perspectives.
- Share the benefits, tasks, and responsibilities of being on the local board/councils with potential recruits.
- Share your diversity recruitment and retention achievements with similar organizations.

For more information please contact:

National Civil Rights Committee

[HTTP://WWW.NRCS.USDA.GOV/ABOUT/CIVILRIGHTS/](http://www.NRCS.USDA.GOV/ABOUT/CIVILRIGHTS/)

Social Sciences Team

[HTTP://WWW.SSL.NRCS.USDA.GOV/](http://www.SSL.NRCS.USDA.GOV/)

American Indian/Alaskan Native Association for NRCS

[HTTP://WWW.NRCS.USDA.GOV/PARTNERS/EMPLOYEE_ORG.HTML](http://www.NRCS.USDA.GOV/PARTNERS/EMPLOYEE_ORG.HTML)

Asian Pacific Islander Organization

[HTTP://WWW.NRCS.USDA.GOV/PARTNERS/EMPLOYEE_ORG.HTML](http://www.NRCS.USDA.GOV/PARTNERS/EMPLOYEE_ORG.HTML)

National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees

[HTTP://WWW.NRCS.USDA.GOV/PARTNERS/EMPLOYEE_ORG.HTML](http://www.NRCS.USDA.GOV/PARTNERS/EMPLOYEE_ORG.HTML)

National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees

[HTTP://WWW.NRCS.USDA.GOV/PARTNERS/EMPLOYEE_ORG.HTML](http://www.NRCS.USDA.GOV/PARTNERS/EMPLOYEE_ORG.HTML)

National Association of Conservation Districts

[HTTP://WWW.NACDNET.ORG/](http://www.NACDNET.ORG/)

National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, Inc.

[HTTP://WWW.RCDNET.ORG/](http://www.RCDNET.ORG/)

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Helping People Help the Land

Conservation Security Program

Upper East Fork White River Watershed and Affected Counties

